

# THE DAILY TRANSCRIPT

## Seniors Long For Independence

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### SAN DIEGO ST. PAUL'S PACE DELIVERS

BY JENNA LONG, STAFF WRITER

In the United States, about 3 million people work in direct-care jobs, mainly with the elderly, as nursing assistants, home health aides and personal care aids. San Diego County has more than 330,000 individuals who are 65 years of age and older and within the next 20 years, that number, according to SANDAG, is expected to grow to about 741,362 individuals—a growth of 125 percent.

“Seniors long for independence” said Alan Allgood executive director of St. Paul’s Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) in San Diego. “Even as they become frail and require greater health care services, many choose to stay in their homes, facing the risk of becoming isolated and having increased challenges with nutrition, general health care needs and socialization. That’s where the PACE program becomes a vital and integral resource for these individuals.”

St. Paul’s PACE is a non-profit health plan for seniors age 55 and older with chronic illness who prefer not to move into a nursing home, but whose medical problems make it impossible for them to stay at home without help from doctors, nurses, social workers and other caregivers. PACE is designed specifically to offer an alternative to institutional living for seniors who live in San Diego and are eligible for nursing home placement.

“The philosophy of PACE,” said Allgood, “is to enhance the quality of life and independence for frail, older adults by providing services that help them stay in the community. Our goal is to maximize dignity and respect while preserving and supporting the family.”

The model, said Allgood, fits well into the concept of health care reform as produced by President Obama and supported by Congress. Supported in California by Medi-CAL and Medicare, PACE provides a full array of health and social services with medical help around the clock, seven-days-a-week.



Roger Berg, 69, had his blood pressure checked by Deborah Spalding, a nurse with St. Paul’s Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly, which provides seniors with enough help to live

“Instead of working with many different providers, PACE has an interdisciplinary team that arranges all services including primary care and social services for each participant.” said Allgood.

He noted that PACE practitioners include a primary care physician, registered nurses, social workers, physical and occupational therapists, dietitians and a home care coordinator. PACE services include psychology; dentistry; podiatry and optometry; audiologist; prescription drug coverage (no co-pays); adult day care; medical equipment/supplies; home care and nutritious meals.

“In just two years since we opened in San Diego we have seen dramatic results in terms of the emotional and, subsequently, physical well-being of our participants here at PACE,” Allgood said.

“Individuals have relished the companionship and camaraderie offered by fellow participants, and benefited from the nutritional on-site meals and health care services. In addition, we provide our participants with transportation services that help them reach us easily.”

St. Paul’s PACE is located at:

111 Elm Street,  
San Diego CA 92101.

For more information call Amanda Dunkin  
619.677.3800 or visit [stpaulspace.org](http://stpaulspace.org)